

4.0 Alternatives to the Project

Statutory Requirements

The California Environmental Quality Act and the CEQA Guidelines require that alternatives to the proposed Project be discussed and analyzed in the EIR. The purpose is to present decision-makers with a variety of alternatives to a proposed project that accomplish the same objectives, but have a lower degree of environmental impact. This section of the EIR presents alternatives to the Project and describes the differential environmental effects associated with each potential alternative in enough detail to enable a reasonable judgment as to whether the Project or one of the alternatives is environmentally superior. Section 15126.6(a) of the CEQA Guidelines provides the following description of what should be included in the analysis of project alternatives:

An EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives. An EIR need not consider every conceivable alternative to a project. Rather it must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision-making and public participation. An EIR is not required to consider alternatives which are infeasible. The lead agency is responsible for selecting a range of project alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. There is no ironclad rule governing the nature or scope of the alternatives to be discussed other than the rule of reason.

This section provides for analysis of the environmental effects associated with several alternative development proposals, as well as the “No Project Alternative.” This analysis is consistent with the requirements of CEQA and concludes with a statement of environmental superiority for the alternative which has the least overall impact on the environment.

Project Objectives

As previously stated in Section 2.0, Project Information, the objectives of the proposed Project include:

- Provision of housing of a density and type that responds to market demand.
- Creation of a medium-density residential development that takes advantage of the relative lack of environmental constraints affecting the Project site.
- Creation of a residential development that can be adequately served by available public infrastructure and services.
- Achieve compatibility with a variety of adjoining land use.

- To the extent feasible, implement SACOG's Blueprint growth principles: Transportation Choices, Mixed-Use Developments, Compact Development, Housing Choice and Diversity, Use of Existing Assets, Quality Design, and Natural Resources Conservation.

Part of the alternatives analysis includes a comparison of each alternative with the Project objectives, and a determination of how many objectives the alternative meets. As stated previously, alternatives should meet the basic objectives of the Project.

Approach to Alternatives Analysis

In accordance with the alternatives analysis requirement of CEQA, two alternative projects and a No Project Alternative were identified and analyzed. These alternatives represent viable options for development of the site, with varying types and degrees of development. Each alternative was chosen as a way to potentially reduce one or more environmental impacts, while still achieving some or all of the Project objectives. The rationale for the selection of these particular alternatives is explained in the following paragraphs.

For many projects, alternate sites for development are evaluated. However, for this Project, only alternatives located on the proposed Project site were considered. This site, designated and zoned for commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family residential development, is located on a previously developed site and surrounded by existing or planned urban development. It is located in such a way as to be conveniently served by existing public facilities and infrastructure. A site for development that was, for example, located far from roadways in order to reduce traffic noise impacts would potentially involve extensions of public infrastructure, the environmental impacts of which may outweigh beneficial effects relative to noise or traffic. In other impact areas, such as air quality, an alternative site would not mitigate potentially significant impacts unless the site was located far from the proposed Project site. In the case of construction related and cumulative air quality impacts, the alternative site would not reduce impacts unless it was located outside of the Sacramento federal ozone nonattainment area. Other than the alternative site, there were no other alternatives considered by the County that were later rejected.

In accordance with the requirements of the CEQA Guidelines and relevant case law, the presentation and analysis of alternatives is not as detailed as that of the Project.¹ The presentation and analysis of alternatives, however, is designed to provide enough information to the public and decision makers to allow for a reasoned, meaningful discussion of the relative merits of the alternatives versus the Project. Normally, alternatives analyses in CEQA documents do not include any diagrammatic representation of alternatives. The illustrations in this section are intended to clarify the concepts presented in the alternatives and encourage a meaningful deliberation on the merits. The illustrations, however, are *conceptual drawings* and do not represent a Project that could be approved based on this EIR. Though the analysis comparing the alternatives is sound and thorough enough for comparative purposes, additional information and analysis would be recommended before approving any of the alternatives as projects using this EIR. The alternative concepts, however, are feasible, and, in general, could accommodate any relevant mitigation measures included within Section 3.0 of this EIR – perhaps in some slightly altered form.

The following section lists the design characteristics of each alternative, and provides explanations of deviations from the original Project design. Impacts associated with each alternative, comparisons between alternatives, and a discussion of whether the alternative meets Project objectives are also provided.

Identification of Project Alternatives

No Project - Alternative 1

Section 15126.6(e)(1) of the Government Code provides the following direction relative to the No Project Alternative:

The specific alternative of "no project" shall also be evaluated along with its impact. The purpose of describing and analyzing a no project alternative is to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. The no project alternative analysis is not the baseline for determining where the proposed project's environmental impacts may be significant, unless it is identical to the existing environmental setting analysis which does establish that baseline (see Section 15125).

The No Project Alternative assumes that the site would remain mostly vacant, with the exception of the canal infrastructure present on-site.

Current Base Zoning - Alternative 2

As shown in **Figure 4-1**, this alternative would place multi-family residential dwellings on the eastern half of the site, between the current alignment of Fiddler Green Canal and Canal Street, as is allowed under the Community Plan and zoning designations on-site. There would be no loss in the number of dwelling units, just an increase in density. The area between Fiddler Green Canal and Wise Canal would be designated for a mixture of retail commercial and office uses. An open space band would be provided between the residential and commercial portions of the site.

Another feature of this alternative is that a full-service (not emergency only) street connection would be provided across a new bridge over Wise Canal through the adjacent, proposed commercial development to the west called The Plaza to Highway 49 at the Hulbert Way intersection. Entry gates, as proposed on Canal Street for the proposed Project, would not be provided in this alternative.

This alternative is designed to provide residential development at approximately the same yield as is proposed under the proposed Project, but at higher density. The retail commercial and office portion is intended to provide a transitional land use between the multi family residential development and the retail commercial shopping center proposed to the west of Wise Canal.

The access point to Canal Street remains unchanged in this alternative. A detention basin is proposed in the northwest corner of the site, as in the proposed Project.

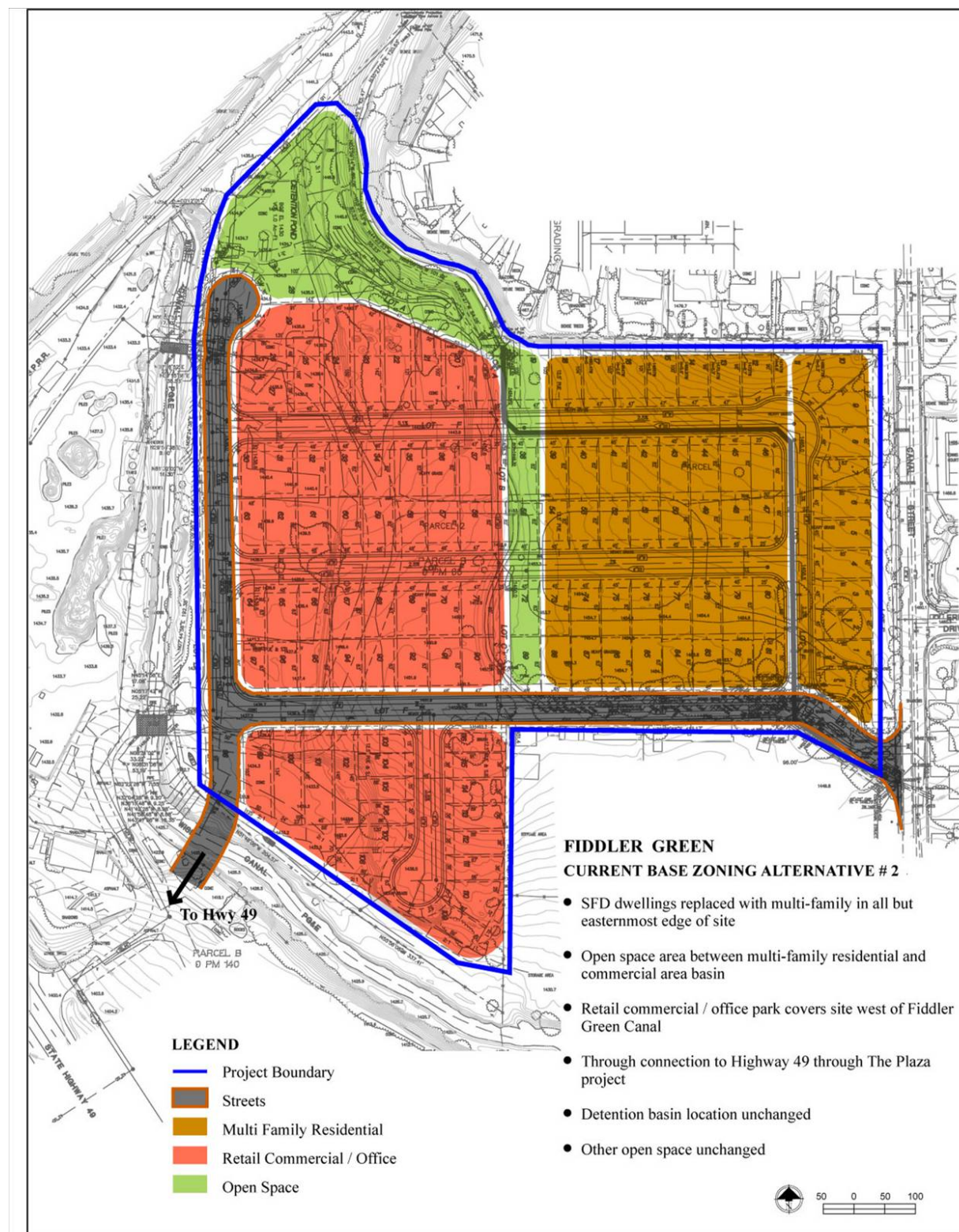


Figure 4-1
Alternative 2
Current Base Zoning Plan

Tree Preservation/Park Plan - Alternative 3

The primary purpose of this alternative is to preserve as many of the existing trees as possible, provide park land, and provide buffering to adjacent land uses to the north and south. This alternative would include mostly parcels for single family detached dwellings; however, some duet-style dwellings could also be included. See **Figure 4-2**.

In this alternative the access point at Canal Street remains unchanged; however, the road would immediately veer to the north in order to avoid the trees at the project entrance. The road would then go in a westerly direction parallel with, and approximately 100 feet from, the site boundary with PG&E. This would avoid removal of the trees along the boundary with the PG&E site. The rear yards of these deeper lots would abut the PG&E yard and the trees would be included in the rear yards as a visual buffer to the PG&E site. The parallel street on the north edge would be moved southward by approximately 50 feet so that the lots abutting the existing residential development to the north would be deeper, thus providing more separation.

This plan includes a neighborhood park in a central location of the site between two parallel streets.. The proposed detention basin location would be unchanged from the proposed Project.

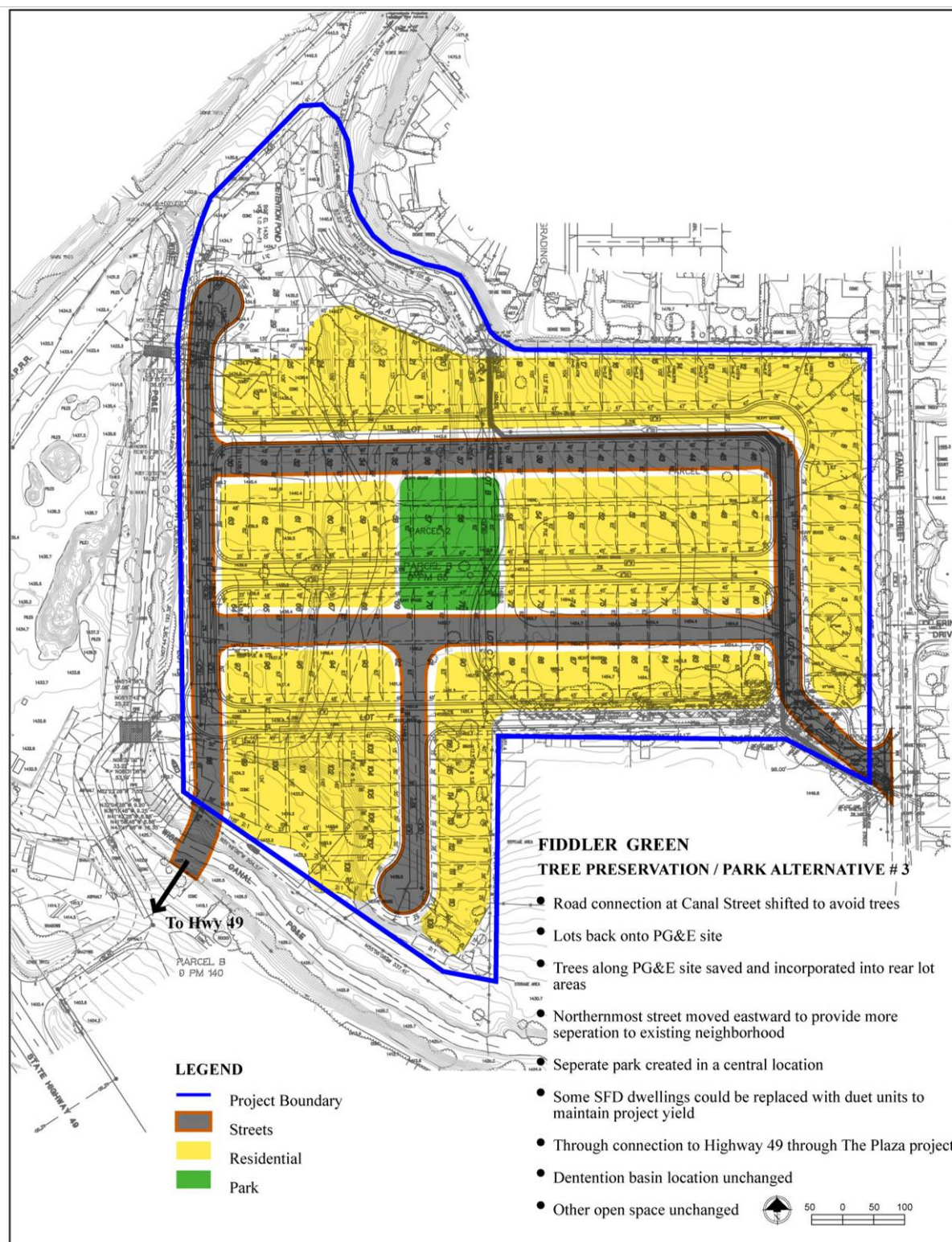
The larger, deeper lots on the north and south edges of the site could result in a loss of single-family lots. Lost density could be compensated with the inclusion of common-wall (duet) lots.

Another feature of this alternative is that a full-service (not emergency only) street connection would be provided across a new bridge over Wise Canal through the adjacent, proposed commercial development to the west called The Plaza to Highway 49 at the Hulbert Way intersection. Entry gates, as proposed on Canal Street for the proposed Project, would not be provided in this alternative.

Comparison of Alternatives

The following section provides a comparison of the environmental impacts associated with each of the Project alternatives. The impacts of each of the alternatives are compared among the various environmental topic areas (air quality, biological resources, etc.) with the proposed Project (discussed in Project Information, Section 2.0 of this EIR). Significant effects that would be caused by the choice of an alternative are discussed to the extent that the effects are different from the Project as proposed.² If a specific impact is not raised within the discussion of an alternative, it is because the impact is expected to be the same as that associated with the implementation of the proposed Project.

The section concludes with the designation of the environmentally superior alternative.



**Figure 4-2
Alternative 3
Tree Preservation/Park Plan**

Alternative 1: No Project

Characteristics of Alternative

Under the No Project Alternative, it is assumed that the Project site would remain vacant, with no improvements to the site or its surroundings. Existing habitat would be maintained and no substantial change to existing site conditions would occur.

Environmental Considerations

Aesthetics

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

In the No Project Alternative, the site would not be developed with structures, and no grading would occur. With mitigation, the proposed Project is not expected to generate any significant impacts related to aesthetics. The No Project Alternative would also have less than significant impacts related to aesthetics.

Air Quality

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Impacts related to air quality would be reduced in the No Project Alternative. The alternative would not include any construction or grading, thus reducing construction emissions and fugitive dust. No additional vehicles would be added to the area roadways, thus reducing auto emissions in the area. Overall, this alternative would significantly reduce air quality impacts, as compared to the proposed Project.

Biological Resources

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Impacts related to biological resources would be reduced in the No Project Alternative. Since no construction would occur on the Project site, existing vegetation and wetland areas would not be disturbed.

Cultural Resources

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Impacts related to cultural resources would be reduced in the No Project Alternative. While no cultural resources have been identified on the Project site, there is a possibility that resources currently hidden beneath the surface may exist. With mitigation included as a part of this EIR, cultural resources impacts are less than significant. Since no construction would occur on the Project site, potentially hidden resources would not be disturbed. Even without mitigation, the impacts of this alternative related to cultural resources are considered less than significant.

Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Impacts to geology, soils, and mineral resources would be reduced in the No Project Alternative. The proposed Project, without mitigation, has potentially significant impacts related to erosion and loss of topsoil, as well as soil suitability for development. Under the No Project Alternative, the suitability of on-site soils for development is irrelevant. With no grading or construction activities, there is no impact related to erosion.

Land Use Planning, Population, and Housing
LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

This alternative would conflict with County goals to place higher density housing and other land uses in proximity to existing public infrastructure and where public services are currently available (Auburn-Bowman Community Plan Community Development Element Policies g, cc, ff, for example). Since no development would occur, the alternative would have no population or housing impacts.

Noise
LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Noise impacts will be reduced in the No Project Alternative. Noise generation is expected to occur as a result of construction activities, vehicular operation, and landscape maintenance equipment. Under the alternative, each of these noise generators would be eliminated, thus reducing noise impacts at the Project site and in surrounding areas. Noise-sensitive land uses on-site in the proposed Project would not be exposed to existing potentially significant sources noise under the No Project alternative. Overall impacts are less in this alternative than the proposed Project.

Public Services, Public Utilities, and Recreation
LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Public services, public utilities, and recreation impacts would be reduced compared to the proposed Project, which would require service from police and fire departments, general government services from Placer County, water and sewer service, added school enrollment, and additional service demands on parks, libraries, and community services. The No Project alternative would not include housing or any addition of population, thus all impacts related to these services would be eliminated. Overall impacts are considered less in this alternative than in the proposed Project.

Safety
LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Safety impacts would be reduced in this alternative compared to the proposed Project. The alternative would not involve earth disturbance, grading, or other activities that could release any potentially hazardous materials. This alternative also would not involve the introduction or use of hazardous materials in lawn care, construction, or for other purposes. No safety impacts would be expected under the No Project Alternative.

Surface Hydrology and Water Quality
LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

The No Project alternative would not loosen soils on-site to increase existing rates of erosion or add impervious surfaces to increase the rate or amount of runoff. The No Project alternative also would not involve the operation of heavy equipment on-site and the associated risk of spill and soil or water contamination. The potentially significant impacts of the Project related to surface hydrology and water quality described in Section 3.10 of this EIR would be less than significant under the No Project alternative.

Transportation

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

The alternative reduces impacts related to transportation and circulation. The No Project Alternative adds no vehicles, thus does not adversely impacts roadway conditions, traffic volumes, or level of service on any area roads. Thus, potentially significant impacts identified in this EIR related to the proposed Project would be reduced to no impact under this alternative.

Ability to Meet Stated Project Objectives

The No Project Alternative proposes no residential development, site improvements, or changes to existing conditions on and around the site. As such, the alternative meets none of the stated Project objectives.

Alternative 2: Current Base Zoning Plan

Characteristics of Alternative

This alternative would place multi-family residential dwellings on the eastern half of the site. The area between Fiddler Green Canal and Wise Canal would be designated for a mixture of retail commercial and office uses. An open space band would be provided between the residential and commercial portions of the site. A full-service street connection would be provided to Highway 49 at Hulbert Way.

Environmental Considerations

Aesthetics

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

Aesthetic impacts of the Current Base Zoning Plan would be similar to those of the No Project alternative, which is not expected to generate any significant impacts with mitigation (related to light and glare). A larger amount of usable open space would be provided in this alternative compared to the Project, an attribute that may be considered aesthetically superior. The aesthetic impacts of this alternative are considered to be potentially significant, and it is expected that the same mitigation as applied to the proposed Project would be available to mitigate impacts of this alternative.

Air Quality

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

The Current Base Zoning Plan would involve more construction and the same or a similar level of grading compared to the proposed Project. The short-term construction impacts could be greater in this alternative compared to the proposed Project, depending on the phasing of construction. Depending on the alternative project's design, impacts related to vehicle emissions could be higher, since, in addition to the same number of housing units, portions of the site would be used for retail/commercial land uses. However, the per-unit traffic impacts of an attached housing unit, such as a townhouse design is lower, so the operational impacts of the housing portion of the alternative would be anticipated to be lower compared to the proposed Project. If an FAR of approximately 50 percent is assumed for the nonresidential portion of the site and a "general office building" is assumed as the land use, the trip generation per day would be approximately 20 percent higher

than the proposed Project, with similar increases to criteria pollutant emissions. This alternative would not result in any new potentially significant impacts, however, compared to the proposed Project relative to operational emissions.

Biological Resources

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

Overall, this alternative would have similar impacts on biological resources to the proposed Project. The same number of trees would be removed.

Cultural Resources

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

The same amount of land that would be disturbed by construction and grading as a result of the Project would be disturbed under this alternative. There are no known cultural resources on the site, and the potential for the disturbance of hidden resources would still exist.

Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

Impacts to geology, soils, and mineral resources would be similar in the Current Base Zoning Plan, compared to the proposed Project. The alternative would be exposed to the same level of seismic risk and would have the same level of soil limitations. The range of mitigation provided for the alternative would be the same (County Department of Public Works Standard Conditions) and the impacts of this alternative are considered to be the same as the proposed Project.

Land Use Planning, Population, and Housing

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

This alternative is consistent with the applicable General Plan and zoning designations for the property. The potentially significant conflicts with planning policy anticipated for the proposed Project are less than significant under this alternative.

Noise

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

Noise impacts would be similar to those anticipated to result from the proposed Project. Both the alternative and the Project are expected to generate noise as a result of construction activities, vehicular operation, and landscape maintenance equipment. Both would expose sensitive land uses to potential existing noise in the Project vicinity. Noise impacts from any Project-related commercial uses on existing or future residential uses may not be calculated accurately until detailed information regarding the commercial occupants is known such as information pertaining to truck operations, HVAC equipment design, and operations hours will be critical in determining future noise exposure generated by these uses. This is considered to be a potentially significant impact which would require mitigation.

Additional noise impacts could result if there were cut-through traffic from Highway 49 through the Project site as a result of the proposed through-route. The nonresidential land uses included in this alternative could provide, depending on design, some amount of shielding from highway noise for the benefit of the residential portion of the site, reducing impacts somewhat. However, overall, noise impacts are considered to be the same under this alternative compared to the proposed Project.

Public Services, Public Utilities, and Recreation

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Since this alternative would provide the same number of housing units as the proposed Project, it would require a similar level of service from general government services, local schools, libraries, and community services. The water and sewer service demand would be higher overall, but peak demand may be similar since the different land uses on-site may have peak demand patterns that do not overlap. School services impacts may be slightly lower if, based on the housing types developed, lower student generation rates are applicable. Though law enforcement and fire standards are usually expressed in terms of population, with more building space on-site, the alternative would require more from law enforcement and fire suppression service providers. Accessibility would be enhanced with the full service instead of just emergency through access to State Route 49 and the lack of a gated entrance in the alternative compared to the proposed Project, which may improve emergency response slightly. Overall, the impact of the alternative relative to infrastructure and services is considered less than significant as in the proposed Project.

Safety

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Safety impacts would be similar under both the Current Base Zoning Plan and the proposed Project since the same areas of the site are planned for development under both scenarios and since none of the land uses proposed are known to be generators or users of substantial amounts of hazardous materials where any release would be anticipated.

Surface Hydrology and Water Quality

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

The alternative proposes the same number of dwelling units and an additional area for nonresidential development. The level of impervious surface added under each scenario could be similar, or, with the increased density provided in this alternative, additional open space and pervious surface might be present. With specific site designs, this determination is speculative. Overall, it is anticipated that the impacts related to surface hydrology and water quality would be similar to the proposed Project under this alternative. Standard mitigation would be used under either scenario, limiting any impact to runoff quality or quantity.

The canals could remain open during a portion of Project construction, risking erosion being transported during construction to surface water bodies off-site (as in the proposed Project). The alternative would be required to obtain the State General Construction Activity Stormwater Permit, with BMPs to control surface runoff and reduce water quality degradation. The alternative would include one or more parking lots to serve the nonresidential land uses included on-site (unless all parking needs were met using on-street parking) and therefore this alternative could involve additional runoff impacts associated with parking lots (oil, grease, etc.). With mitigation strategies similar to that included in the proposed Project the impacts of this alternative would likely be similar overall.

Transportation

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

This alternative would increase daily traffic generation by approximately 20 percent.³ With a mixing of land uses on-site, the timing of peak demands among the land uses might be different, therefore limiting the additional impact related to peak-hour intersection level of service. The provision of multi-family units could make public transportation in the area more feasible. The mixing of land

uses on-site may encourage additional walking. The through connection may also encourage walking or bicycling that would have not otherwise occurred. Overall, the alternative is expected to have the same significance determinations as under the proposed Project.

Ability to Meet Stated Project Objectives

The alternative would meet all of the Project objectives.

Alternative 3: Tree Preservation/Park Plan

Characteristics of Alternative

This alternative, by shifting the proposed access road approximately 130 feet to the north, would preserve the trees that are clustered at the southeastern portion of the Project site. This alternative would also provide centralized park land. A full-service (not emergency only) street connection would be provided across a new bridge over Wise Canal through the adjacent, proposed commercial development and to Highway 49 at the Hulbert Way intersection. Entry gates, as proposed on Canal Street for the proposed Project, would not be provided in this alternative.

Environmental Considerations

Aesthetics

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

Aesthetic impacts of this alternative would be the same as the proposed Project except the alternative would retain the cluster of trees on the southeastern portion of the Project site, including some mature Live and Blue Oak. Additional buffering to the north may reduce light/glare and other aesthetic impacts to the adjacent residences slightly.

Air Quality

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

The same impacts at the same level would be anticipated under this alternative. The Hulbert Way intersection may have slightly higher carbon monoxide concentrations with a corresponding reduction in the carbon monoxide concentrations for the Luther Road/Canal Street intersection and Luther Road/Highway 49 intersection during the peak hour. Overall, air quality impacts would be the same as in the proposed Project.

Biological Resources

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

Impacts of the alternative would be the same except for reduced need for tree removal under the alternative.

Cultural Resources

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

The amount of land that would be disturbed by construction and grading would be reduced very slightly, but the impacts of this alternative on cultural resources would be the same to those of the proposed Project. There are no known cultural resources on the site, and the potential for the disturbance of hidden resources would still exist.

Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

Impacts to geology, soils, and mineral resources would be very slightly reduced in this alternative compared to the proposed Project. Soil limitation impacts would require mitigation in accordance with the County Department of Public Works Standard Conditions.

Land Use Planning, Population, and Housing

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

The alternative would be more consistent with County policies discouraging isolated, walled or gated communities; tree preservation; and land use (if the alternative provided attached units). However, since land use planning impacts are considered less than significant for the proposed Project, the significance determination does not change.

Noise

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

Noise impacts would be similar to those anticipated to result from the proposed Project. Both the alternative and the Project are expected to generate noise as a result of construction activities, vehicular operation, and landscape maintenance equipment. Both would expose sensitive land uses to potential existing noise in the Project vicinity. Some additional noise impact could result as a part of the alternative compared to the proposed Project if there were cut-through traffic from Highway 49 through the Project site as a result of the proposed through-route. However, a substantial amount of cut-through traffic would be required before any perceivable difference in noise levels occurred. Overall, noise impacts are considered to be the same under this alternative compared to the proposed Project.

Public Services, Public Utilities, and Recreation

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

The public services and utilities impacts of the alternative are the same as those for the proposed Project, except that law enforcement and fire response would have increased access to the site with the through connection and lack of entrance gate. Additional centrally located parkspace is provided in the alternative, which could slightly reduce any impact to parks in the vicinity if some residents forgo off-site opportunities in favor of the on-site parkspace. There is no change to the significance characterization.

Safety

LEVEL OF IMPACT – LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT

Safety impacts would be similar under both the Current Base Zoning Plan and the proposed Project since the same areas of the site are planned for development under both scenarios and since none of the land uses proposed are known to be generators or users of substantial amounts of hazardous materials where any release would be anticipated.

Surface Hydrology and Water Quality

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

The alternative is assumed to have the same number of dwelling units as in the proposed Project. The level of impervious surface added under each scenario would be similar, or, with a very slightly increased density provided in this alternative, additional open space and pervious surface might be present. If there is a difference, it would be so slight that it would not affect stormwater runoff. The canals could remain open during a portion of Project construction, risking erosion being transported

during construction to surface water bodies off-site (as in the proposed Project). The alternative would be required to obtain the State General Construction Activity Stormwater Permit, with BMPs to control surface runoff and reduce water quality degradation. Overall, it is anticipated that the impacts related to surface hydrology and water quality would be similar to the proposed Project under this alternative. Standard mitigation would be used under either scenario, limiting any impact to runoff quality or quantity.

Transportation

LEVEL OF IMPACT – POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT

The transportation impacts of the alternative would be similar to those of the proposed Project. However, the through connection to Highway 49 could encourage some walking trips as pedestrian access to commercial opportunities along Highway 49 would be enhanced. A slight redistribution of trips would occur with this through connection relative to Hulbert Way and Luther Road and their intersections with State Highway 49. Significance characterizations for the proposed Project would apply to this alternative as well, except that potentially significant impacts at the intersection of Luther Road and Canal Street for the proposed Project without Hulbert Way would be less than significant under this alternative with the through connection to Hulbert Way.

If a secondary access to the Project site is provided via the SR-49/Hulbert Way intersection, a portion of the Project traffic to/from SR49 north of Hulbert Way would be diverted from Canal Street, Luther Road and SR-49 [between Luther Road and Hulbert Way (North)] to the new secondary access. Similarly, a portion of Project traffic to/from SR-49 south of Luther Road would be diverted from Luther Road and Canal Street to SR-49 [between Luther Road and Hulbert Way (North)] and the new secondary access.

SR-49/Hulbert Way (North) – The diversion would result in newly created left and right turn Project volumes to and from the new secondary access at the intersection, and a slight decrease in south and northbound through Project volumes along SR-49. Although the net effect of these altered volumes would result in a very slight increase in the intersection delay, this increase would not degrade the intersection's level of service beyond that calculated for the proposed Project.

SR-49/Luther Road – The diversion would result in a slight decrease in the left and right turn Project volumes to and from Luther Road east of SR-49 at the intersection, and newly created south and northbound through Project volumes along SR-49 through the intersection. Although the net effect of these altered volumes would result in a very slight decrease in the intersection delay, it would not improve the intersection's level of service compared to that calculated for the proposed Project.

Luther Road/Canal Street – The diversion would result in a decrease in the southbound right and eastbound left turn Project volumes at the intersection. Although the net effect of these altered volumes would result in a very slight decrease in the intersection delay, it would not improve the intersection's level of service compared to that calculated for the proposed Project.

Project Driveway/Canal Street – The diversion would result in a decrease in the eastbound right and northbound left turn Project volumes at the intersection. Although the net effect of these altered volumes would result in a very slight decrease in the intersection delay, it would not improve the intersection's level of service.

SR-49 Corridor between Luther Road and Hulbert Way (North) – Traffic traveling between Luther Road and Hulbert Way to access the proposed Project via Luther Road and Canal Street would be diverted to the new secondary access. This diversion would result in a decrease in that component of Project volumes along that section of SR-49. However, provision of the secondary access associated with the alternative would also result in the diversion of some trips traveling between the Project and SR-49 south of Luther Road, and accessing the Project site via Luther Road and Canal Street, to instead continue along SR-49 north of Luther Road to the secondary access resulting in an increase in that component of Project volumes along that section of SR-49. The net change in project volumes along the section of SR-49 between Luther Road and to the secondary access at Hulbert Way (North) would be negligible, and thus the level of service along this section of SR-49 would remain unchanged compared to that calculated for the proposed Project.

Luther Road east of SR-49 – Provision of secondary access at Hulbert Way (North) would result in a diversion of some Project trips from Luther Road east of SR-49 onto SR-49 north of Luther Road. However, although this diversion would result in a decrease in Project volumes along Luther Road east of SR-49, the level of service along the segment would not change compared to that calculated for the proposed Project.

Ability to Meet Stated Project Objectives

Depending on the design of the Project site and the large commercial project to the southwest and depending on the design of the circulation system serving them, this alternative may not achieve the Project objective having to do with compatibility of adjoining land uses. Residential properties in this alternative have back yards that directly abut the PG&E corporation yard, which may create compatibility conflicts. This alternative would also not achieve certain Blueprint principles, though if more than one residential type is included on-site, this alternative would provide housing choices, which is promoted by the Blueprint project.

Comparative Environmental Superiority

Table 4-1 provides a summary comparison of the potential level of environmental impacts of the alternatives with the proposed Project.

Among the four alternatives, the No Project Alternative (Alternative 1) is the environmentally superior choice. The No Project alternative would substantially lessen the impacts on most environmental topic areas when compared to the proposed Project. However, this alternative would meet none of the Project objectives.

CEQA requires that if the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, then the EIR must state the next most environmentally superior alternative as well. The remaining two alternatives discussed are anticipated to have the same general significance characterizations as the proposed Project. There are certain elements of Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 that (depending on how they might be designed) may result in slightly higher or lower environmental impacts compared to the proposed Project, but it is expected that significance characterizations would not change. Alternative 2 fulfills all Project objectives, while Alternative 3 would fulfill three of the five stated objectives.

**Table 4-1
Comparison of Project with Alternative Plans**

Environmental Topic	Alternative 1 No Project	Alternative 2 Current Base Zoning	Alternative 3 Tree Preservation/Park
Aesthetics	Less than significant*	Potentially significant	Potentially significant
Air Quality	Less than significant*	Potentially significant	Potentially significant
Biological Resources	Less than significant*	Potentially significant	Potentially significant
Cultural Resources	Less than significant*	Potentially significant	Potentially significant
Geology, Soils, and Minerals	Less than significant*	Potentially significant	Potentially significant
Land Use Planning, Population, and Housing	Less than significant	Less than significant	Less than significant
Noise	Less than significant*	Potentially significant	Potentially significant
Public Services, Utilities, and Recreation	Less than significant*	Less than significant	Less than significant
Safety	Less than significant	Less than significant	Less than significant
Surface Hydrology and Water Quality	Less than significant*	Potentially significant	Potentially significant
Transportation	Less than significant*	Potentially significant	Potentially significant
Project Objectives Met	0 of 5	5 of 5	3 of 5

* Level of impact different from that determined for proposed Project.

Notes and References

- ¹ Please refer to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(d) and County of Inyo v. City of Los Angeles (1981) 124 Cal.App3d 1.
- ² This approach is consistent with the CEQA Guidelines and relevant case law, namely Stevens v. City of Glendale (1981) 125 Cal.App.3d 986.
- ³ This estimate uses the URBEMIS air pollutant emissions impact assessment software built in traffic demand estimates. This estimate also assumes the residential dwellings on-site are of a condominium or townhome design, but not a high rise building and that “general office building” is developed on-site at an FAR of approximately 0.5.